

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PEKING 01112 212244Z
ACTION EA-12

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FM USLO PEKING
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0494
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 1112

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR EAID CH SO
SUBJ: SIAD BARRE COMPLETES PEKING VISIT

REF: PEKING 1048 (NOTAL)

1. SOMALI PRESIDENT SIAD BARRE COMPLETED HIS VISIT TO THE PRC ON APRIL 18. THE SOLE CONCRETE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE VISIT WAS AN ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT SIGNED ON APRIL 18, WHOSE TEXT HAS NOT BEEN MADE PUBLIC. IN HIS SPEECH AT THE APRIL 17 RETURN BANQUET, VICE PREMIER LI HSIEN-NIEN MODESTLY ACKNOWLEDGED SOMALI THANKS FOR CHINESE AID, BUT THE TOASTS REVEALED NOTHING OF THE CONTENT OF THE SINO-SOMALI TALKS.

2. FOREIGN DIPLOMATS WHO ATTENDED THE AIRPORT SENDOFF CEREMONY HAVE TOLD US THAT SIAD WAS VISIBLY UNHAPPY AT THE RESULTS OF THE TRIP. ACCORDING TO A GERMAN EMBOFF, WHO WAS GIVEN A READOUT ON THE VISIT BY A SOMALI DIPLOMAT, THE PRC DID NOT RESPOND TO SOMALI REQUESTS FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE. INSTEAD, THEY GAVE SOME VAGUE PLEDGES TO COMPLETE CERTAIN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROJECTS BEGUN BY THE SOVIETS IN SOMALIA, BUT OTHERWISE MADE NO SIGNIFICANT NEW COMMITMENTS.

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3. THE SOMALI DIPLOMAT ALSO REPORTEDLY SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT SUSPECTS THE CHINESE OF TRYING TO RETAIN LINKS TO THE ETHIOPIAN LEADERSHIP. HE CLAIMED VAGUELY THAT A "MAOIST FACTION"--ADMITTEDLY MINISCULE OWING TO BLOOD PURGES--WAS STILL REPRESENTED IN ADDIS ABABA AND HAD PERIODICALLY DISPATCHED ENVOYS TO PEKING IN

SECRET. HE ALSO REFERRED, WITHOUT PROVIDING EVIDENCE, TO ALLEGED PRC "MILITARY SUPPORT" TO ETHIOPIA, NOTING THE RECENT RECEPTION OF AN ETHIOPIAN DELEGATION BY PEKING MILITARY REGION COMMANDER CHEN HSI-LIEN.

4. COMMENT: IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT PEKING HAS GIVEN LESS THAN WHOLEHEARTED SUPPORT TO MOGADISCIO'S OGADEN ADVENTURE AND THAT IT HAS TRIED TO MAINTAIN CORRECT RELATIONS WITH THE ADDIS ABABA GOVERNMENT. THE ETHIOPIAN DELEGATION REFERRED TO ABOVE, HOWEVER, WAS LED BY THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ETHIOPIAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY AND WAS IN PEKING IN CONNECTION WITH THE INAUGURATION OF NEW FLIGHTS BETWEEN CHINA AND ADDIS ABABA. HIS RECEPTION BY CHEN, WHO ALSO HOLDS THE TITLE OF VICE PREMIER AND WHOSE RESPONSIBILITIES ARE NOT LIMITED TO MILITARY AFFAIRS, DOES NOT STRIKE US AS UNUSUAL.

5. SOMALIA'S APPARENT LACK OF SUCCESS IN OBTAINING LARGE-SCALE ASSISTANCE FROM THE PRC IS CONSISTENT WITH THE EXPERIENCE OF OTHER AFRICAN LEADERS WHOSE HOPES OF A CHINESE CORNUCOPIA HAVE BEEN DASHED BY THE REALITIES OF PEKING'S LIMITED ECONOMIC RESOURCES. CHINESE RHETORIC OF A UNITED FRONT TO OPPOSE SOVIET HEGEMONISM SEEMS ALMOST DESIGNED TO ENGENDER UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS. WE WOULD CAUTION, HOWEVER, THAT THE SOMALI EMBASSY HERE MAY NOT BE GIVING THE FULL STORY. DESPITE PEKING'S CONFIDENTIAL

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AWARENESS OF THE UNPOPULARITY OF SOMALI EXPANSIONIST AIMS IN MUCH OF AFRICA AND ITS RESULTANT DISINCLINATION TO GET INVOLVED, WE WOULD NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY OF SOME GESTURE BY THE CHINESE TO HELP COMPENSATE SIAD BARRE FOR HIS LOSS OF SOVIET WEAPONS. WOODCOCK

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Message Attributes

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